

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-03 USIA-15 PRS-01

RSR-01 /070 W

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R 231939Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3356

INFO USCINCSO

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USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, AR

SUBJ: INTER-UNION RIVALRY THREATENS UNEASY CORDOBA LABOR
TRUCE

1. UTILIZING A ONE DAY DELAY IN RECEIPT OF A SEMI-ANNUAL BONUS AS A PRETEXT, SUPPORTERS OF CORDOBA TROTSKYITE-ORIENTED MECHANICS UNION (SMATA) SEIZED THE FIAT AUTOMOTIVE PLANT ON AUG 21 AND ARE USING IT AS A BARGAINING WEAPON FOR THEIR DEMAND THAT WORKERS BE REPRESENTED BY SMATA, RATHER THAN BY THE METAL WORKERS UNION (UOM). AN UNDERTERMINED NUMBER OF MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL, WHO ALLEGEDLY REMAINED IN THE PLANT TO GUARD PAYROLL FUNDS, WERE HELD INSIDE THE COMPLEX.

2. A WORKER'S DELEGATION MET WITH VICE GOVERNOR ATILIO LOPEZ AND DEMANDED IMMEDIATE PAYMENT OF THE BONUS, NO REPRISALS TO BE TAKEN BY MANAGEMENT, AND A CHANGE IN UNION REPRESENTATION. LOPEZ AND MANAGEMENT ACCEDED TO FIRST TWO DEMANDS BUT NO ACTION WAS TAKEN ON THE THIRD AS OPPOSING METAL WORKERS UNION OFFICIALS STATED THEY WILL NOT RELINQUISH THEIR REPRESENTATION OF FIAT WORKERS. ALL CORDOBA SMATA AFFILIATED UNIONS BEGAN SYMPATHY STRIKE ON AUG 22, AND THE MARXIST CONTROLLED POWER & LIGHT
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UNION ISSUED A STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE OCCUPIERS. SITUATION

IS REPORTEDLY CALM AS OF AUG 23 WITH THE OCCUPIERS STILL IN CONTROL OF PLANT, WHICH IS CORDONED BY POLICE AND ARMY TROOPS.

3. COMMENT: PRESENT DISPUTE IS HERITAGE OF LANUSSE GOVERNMENT'S OCT 1971 CANCELLATION OF LEGAL STATUS OF TROTSKYITE-CONTROLLED FIAT UNIONS SITRAC AND SITRAM. GOA ARBITRARILY AWARDED UCM JURISDICTION OVER THE EX SITRAC-SITRAM WORKERS IN NOV 1972 DESPITE THEIR PREFERENCE OF SMATA. OUTCOME OF PRESENT CONFLICT IS VERY MUCH IN DOUBT AS GOA IS NOT IN A POSITION TO ACCEDE TO OCCUPIERS' DEMANDS. SMATA IS CONTROLLED BY RENE SALAMANCA WHO ALIGNED WITH MARXIST POWER & LIGHT UNION LEADER AGUSTIN TOSCO, IS IN DIRECT AND OPEN CONFRONTATION WITH PERONIST LABOR MOVEMENT. THE NATIONAL UOM SECRETARY GENERAL, LORENZO MIGUEL, IS HEAD OF THE PERONIST 62 ORGANIZATION AND LAST WEEK WAS MADE A MEMBER OF THE PERONIST PARTY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. DESPITE SUCH FORMIDABLE OPPOSITION, IT APPEARS UNLIKELY THAT THE OCCUPIERS WILL ACCEPT LESS THAN GOA AGREEMENT TO HOLD REPRESENTATION ELECTIONS, WHICH UNQUESTIONABLY WOULD BE WON BY SMATA. THE SITUATION REMAINS POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE AND COULD FORCE RENEWAL OF THE CORDOBA PERONIST-MARXIST LABOR WARFARE, WHICH HAS ENJOYED AN UNEASY TRUCE SINCE JULY.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973BUENOS06255
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730821/aaaaaozf.tel
Line Count: 83
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15-Jan-2002 by martinjw>; APPROVED <06-Feb-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INTER-UNION RIVALRY THREATENS UNEASY CORDOBA LABOR TRUCE
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, AR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005